

AMENDING MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS      APRIL 8, 2014

**Supporting the National Movement to Connect Veterans with Construction Jobs**

Military service is an honorable act. Men and women in the United States military and reserve forces risk their lives to protect and defend the nation, frequently making significant personal, family and career sacrifices. Beyond the risks to life and limb with which military and reserve personnel contend, are the interruptions to job training and work experience that may result in barriers to employment, promotional opportunities and career advancement upon their discharge and return to civilian life. During the course of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, now distinguished as America's longest war, standing and reserve forces of the military have been called upon to serve multiple tours of duty. Upon discharge, their status as veterans is a barrier to employment, particularly in the building and construction trades.

There is a national movement afoot where businesses are making a commitment to proactively make veterans' financial lives better. While the programs may vary in name, the comprehensive strategy and program platforms have the same goal: to cause the hiring of more veterans. Los Angeles County (County) is making significant

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capital program investments financed by hundreds of millions of local and State-generated tax dollars; yet, it does not have a comprehensive strategy or program platform to cause the hiring of more veterans. Completion of these capital projects will employ thousands of construction workers who will earn well over triple the County's current living wage per hour on average, plus receive health and retirement benefits.

As with the County's contracting and procurement practices, these projects represent significant employment opportunities and a chance for the economic benefits of such local tax dollar financed investments to be shared broadly by County residents in a manner that does not discriminate against or give preference to any particular group based on race, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. However, these projects fail to specifically target veterans who reside in Los Angeles County. The County has a legitimate interest in enhancing opportunities for qualified County residents who have honorably served in the military and/or its reserve forces.

Creating a County-based program is possible. The Martin Luther King, Jr. In-Patient Tower and Multi-service Ambulatory Care Clinic Construction Careers Policy explicitly recognized the hardships veterans face by incorporating them in its definition of "disadvantaged worker," and the "helmets to hardhats" initiative mandates that construction workers who are veterans be given preference in hiring on these County construction projects. The County needs to acknowledge and address the economic

disadvantages experienced by our service men and women by creating more job opportunities.

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Establish a mandatory Local Worker Hire Program for Veterans (LWHP for Veterans) on county new construction projects for veterans of the United States military who meet the following criteria:
  - a. Must be residents of Los Angeles County.
  - b. Are pursuing a career in the building and construction trades upon successful completion of, or enrollment in, a joint labor management apprenticeship program;
2. The LWHP for Veterans shall:
  - a. Require that contractors make specific efforts, subject to liquidated damages, to have a percentage to be determined by the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the departments of Military and Veteran Affairs and Public Works and the County Veterans Advisory Commission of the project's construction hours performed by qualified County residents who are veterans;
  - b. Not be applicable if any portion of the project's financing includes federal funding and that its definition of construction hours

excludes any work performed by workers residing in states other than California.

- c. Post monthly updates on progress in meeting the goals of the LWHP for Veterans on the Department of Public Works website;

3. Adopt the following findings:

- a. The LWHP for Veterans does not constitute a project under Section 15378(b) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is a an organizational or administrative activity of government and/or a government fiscal activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment and which does not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment. Individual projects, as defined under CEQA, subject to the LWHP for Veterans, will be required to include the impacts of the inclusion of the LWHP for Veterans in applicable environmental documentation prepared for the project which will be considered by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors along with project approval recommendations, as appropriate, prior to project implementation.

- b. The LWHP for Veterans serves a legitimate governmental purpose and public policy goal of the County aimed at enhancing opportunities for local County residents who served in the United States military or its reserve to be hired as construction workers on County projects that are subject to the LWHP for Veterans; and
- 4. Direct and delegate the authority to the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Director of Public Works and County Counsel, to develop additional administrative processes, procedures, rules, guidelines, and the solicitation and contract language, for the LHWP for Veterans; and to take all additional actions as may be necessary or appropriate to fully implement the LWHP for Veterans, including, but not limited to, promulgating any additional LWHP for Veterans rules, interpretations, and amendments or modifications.

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